



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Darrel J. Aubertine

Ogdensburg Correctional Facility Safe!

DARREL J. AUBERTINE June 18, 2010

| ISSUE: **CORRECTIONAL**

OCF SAFE

Aubertine: Future Secured for OCF, Moriah Shock

Senator thanks Governor for listening to community, providing for full and continued operation

ALBANY (June 18, 2010)—State Sen. Darrel J. Aubertine today announced that an agreement has been reached providing for the full and continued operation of Ogdensburg Correctional Facility and Moriah Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility. A letter will be sent by the Department of Corrections rescinding the notice of closure, reflecting the agreement finalized this week.

“We have reached an agreement with the Governor to keep both Ogdensburg Correctional and Moriah Shock open,” Sen. Aubertine said. “As I’ve said all along, working together we would get this done. This letter will provide for the full and continued operation of these facilities. I want to thank Governor Paterson for listening to the people, giving us the opportunity to present our case and agreeing to take this proposal out of the budget process.”

Notices of closure for OCF and Moriah Shock had been sent by Department of Corrections Commissioner Brian Fischer and were supported in Gov. David Paterson’s proposed budget, which was released in January. Sen. Aubertine opened a constant dialogue with the Governor and the Department of Corrections on this issue in order to make the case for the facilities and give community members access to share their stories.

“The decision to close these facilities had been made without local input, but the language to keep it open has been included because of our local voices,” Sen. Aubertine said. “By opening up a civil dialogue, we had the opportunity to present the governor with the facts and really demonstrate how important this

facility is to the community and the Department of Corrections. I'm proud of the work we have done with the task force and the entire community to save our correctional facility."

The local Ogdensburg Correctional Facility Task Force, headed by St. Lawrence Newspapers Publisher Chuck Kelly, worked closely with Sen. Aubertine, including through regular phone calls between Mr. Kelly and the Senator, to keep OCF open. A staff member attended every meeting and the Senator attended several events, including a meeting of hundreds to gear up for the fight, a rally of thousands on the steps of Ogdensburg City Hall to show support, and a rally of hundreds who descended on the Capitol in Albany wearing unmistakable bright orange shirts to work with Sen. Aubertine. On that Albany trip, the Senator arranged a meeting with the Governor's office and Commissioner Fischer, who later made his own trip to see OCF for himself.

"The community involvement has been remarkable and like no movement I've seen," Sen. Aubertine said. "Whether by rallying thousands of people in Albany, by sending hundreds by busload to Albany with binders detailing every reason to keep OCF open, or by sending thank you cards to the lawmakers who have supported our cause, the people of Ogdensburg have left no stone unturned in their efforts to save these jobs and the hundreds more the facility supports in this community. This has always been about standing up for our friends and neighbors who make up this community, and ensuring our friends and relatives at other prisons have the opportunity some day to transfer back home."

Ogdensburg Correctional Facility is medium security and employs 287 members of the surrounding community with more than 95 percent of its 490 staffed beds occupied. The facility is a model of efficiency with its \$22 million payroll that includes overtime numbers 50 to 85 percent lower than other facilities in the state. The experienced, well trained and efficient staff run the facility so well that the unusual incidents among inmates is less than half the statewide average and the American Correctional Association has awarded accreditation scores of 99 and 100 percent. In fact, in 2008-09 the facility staff managed to under spend their budget, saving the state \$100,000, while recent reports have shown downstate facilities in the DOCS system have spent exorbitant amounts on overtime.

Moriah Shock in Minneville employs 102 people and has been part of an increasing effort to use alternative incarceration techniques to rehabilitate prisoners. The facility has been run at about 85 percent of its 200 staffed bed capacity.